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ABSTRACT

The study describes an experimental program in Vancouver to teach English as an additional language to older immigrants who were excluded from existing programs for one reason or another. Classes were held during the morning hours on two consecutive days for seven weeks (with a five-week extension course) in a community center; 45 adults were enrolled. Their ages ranged from 30 to 80 with the average being 3[illegible]. They spoke 10 native languages; nearly half were German speakers. The aural-oral method, as used in the regular English language training classes, was the main basis of instruction with some adherence to the older cognitive code-learning theory. While the steess was on situational teaching, team teaching was employed, as were numerous and various teaching aids to supplement the situational contexts. A sample of a typical day's lesson is offered. In light of positive student progress in terms of command of the language (especially in situational contexts) and of social confidence, the program was considered a success. Because of its success, plans were developed and implemented to expand it to include five other community centers, where the results were similarly positive. (JR)

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TEACHING ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE TO OLDER PEOPLE: A CASE STUDY

by

Jean Mary Buzan

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FOREWORD

Although the need for new learning persists throughout life, the adult education establishment does not provide adequate opportunities for older adults to learn. This situation arises because adult educators assume that existing programs can and do meet the needs of older adults yet participation studies show that this group is consistently under-represented in educational activities. Older adults need programs that differ from those planned for younger adults with respect to the content of the program as well as the instructional processes used.

The case study presented here describes an experiment in the design and management of an educational program for older adults. This is not a research report about the learning of English as an additional language although that was the basic content of the program. It does describe an attempt to meet learning needs of older adult immigrants by structuring an educational activity specifically for that group. As such, it may be useful to others elsewhere by showing that older adults do have specific learning needs, that they are eager to learn, and that careful planning and instruction can produce useful adult education programs successfully for that group.

The Adult Education Research Centre has issued this report as one of a series of studies that may prove useful to the field by illustrating a way of broadening the scope of program planning to meet the needs for learning by groups not now served adequately by existing activities.

Coolie Verner,
Professor of Adult Education

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		PAGE
	FOREWORD	ii
CHAPTER		
I.	ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING AND THE OLDER IMMIGRANT	1
	CURRENT ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING COURSES IN VANCOUVER	1
	NEED	4
II.	PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION	6
	PLANNING	6
	IMPLEMENTATION	12
	ANALYSIS OF REGISTRATIONS	15
III.	INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESSES AND CONTENT	19
	INSTRUCTION	19
	CONTENT	24
IV.	EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT	32
	ATTENDANCE	32
	OPINIONS OF PARTICIPANTS	35
	EVALUATION BY TEACHERS' AIDE	36
	ANECDOTAL EVALUATION	38
	ATTAINMENT OF GOALS	43
V.	SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS	45
	SEMINAR FOR FUTURE TEACHERS	45
	PLAN FOR FUTURE COURSES	46
	SUBSEQUENT COURSES	48
BIBLIOGRAPHY		50

CHAPTER I

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING AND THE OLDER IMMIGRANT

For the immigrant whose native language is not English the problems encountered in attempting to become a fully-integrated citizen of Canada must at times appear insurmountable so that English language training becomes a major goal particularly if he is to earn a living.

One segment of the immigrant population whose problems are especially difficult consists of older people who can use only their native language. Some of these have immigrated in recent years with their children while others came years ago but have had no opportunity or encouragement to learn the language of their adopted country; consequently, they are imprisoned in a 'language ghetto' which allows them to communicate only with their own families and friends.

In Canada in 1966, the percentage of the total population over forty-five years of age was 25.4 per cent. Many of these older citizens are foreign immigrants who have an inability to speak English as well as the trauma of separation from the culture into which they were born and the necessity to adapt to a strange and unfamiliar one.

CURRENT ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING COURSES IN VANCOUVER

The Canada Department of Citizenship and Immigration is aware of the need for English language training classes since it is obviously desirable to have the immigrant population learn English well enough to be employable. To this end, the Department provides a five months full-time English language training program for immigrants who are paid a training allowance which supports them during this period. If an individual is absent from the course for no good reason he loses his training allowance as an employee would lose his wages. These classes are conducted principally at the Special Programs Division of the Vancouver City College. The

Department also locates a few courses in other centres, such as the Y. M. C. A., and in some private language schools.

The Vancouver City College conducts classes (formerly known as "English for New Canadians" but now designated "English Language Training Classes") for which the participants pay a fee. For those who work during the day, there are evening classes which usually operate on a two or four-night-a-week basis for two hours a night. These classes are located at six Vancouver secondary schools. Those with more time available may enroll in day-time classes held at the Special Programs Division five days a week, three hours a day, either morning or afternoon. There are also three-hour Saturday morning classes both at the Special Programs Division and at the Vancouver Vocational Institute. Courses are available at many levels of language proficiency ranging from beginners with no knowledge of English at all to university entrance standard. A minimum of fifteen students is required for any one course. Apart from these regular classes, special classes are provided to meet particular needs. Recently, for example, three pilot courses were started: (1) an evening class for "English Through Typewriting" based on a programmed course developed in California;[1] (2) an evening class specifically for French Canadians; and (3) a class specially designed to prepare foreign-born nurses and pharmacists for examinations in English.

The English Language Training Program of the Vancouver City College has been expanded recently by the addition of School Canadiana, a joint project of Inner City Services, the First United Church and the Y. W. C. A., which is under contract to the City College and acts as their agent. This program offers language classes in the ethnic community using bilingual teachers. This approach encourages immigrants to participate who might otherwise be reluctant to attend a class offered in a large centre involving people of other ethnic groups. It enables them

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[1] C. W. Gay, R. B. Kaplan and R. D. Schoesler, *Learning English Through Typewriting* (Washington, D. C.: Washington Educational Research Associates, Inc., 1969.)

to participate in their own neighbourhood with people who speak the same language which is a necessary first step for many. This attracts many young mothers as it also provides a baby-sitting service. School Canadiana operates largely in the Chinese community, with a few classes in the Japanese, Spanish and Italian communities. Although a nominal fee is normally charged, the classes are available without cost when there is a real inability to pay. Volunteers are used for the baby-sitting service while the teachers are paid at a lower rate than those in the normal City College classes. Many of those who attend this school later join regular City College classes as they gain sufficient confidence to go outside their own ethnic group. There are more than eighty English language classes offered by Vancouver City College and these provide training to well over one thousand adult immigrants in the City of Vancouver.

In addition to the Vancouver City College classes, there are three Schools of Languages including the Berlitz, the Conversa and the Wallen, as well as Huberman College which teaches language along with other academic subjects. In West Vancouver the West Vancouver Tutoring College has English as an additional language in its curriculum. The University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University conduct special classes for foreign students attending those universities who have not attained the prerequisite level of competency in English.

In spite of the fairly broad program of English language training available in Vancouver, the older immigrant group appears to have been neglected since only a comparatively small number of older people have attended existing classes. Furthermore, so far as could be determined, there have been no special efforts to serve the older adult immigrant in other parts of Canada nor in other English speaking countries.

It was assumed that older immigrants do not participate in existing language courses for a variety of reasons:

1. Most part-time courses in Vancouver are at night and many older people dislike going out after dark.
2. Most courses in Vancouver are held in schools which the immigrant conceives of as places for children.

3. Most courses in Vancouver have younger adult students and competition with them is frightening to an older person.
4. Many teachers are young, and in some cultures it is humiliating for an older person to have to feel inferior to a younger one.
5. If no courses are within easy reach, travelling is a deterrent to the older person.
6. The content of regular courses designed for younger students is not geared to the special needs of older students.

NEED

In view of the evident gap in the English language training classes available in Vancouver, there appeared to be a need for a program to teach English to older residents of foreign origin. Apart from the difficulties which an inability to communicate must have caused them, the loss to Canada of the rich cultural heritage which immigrants could add to Canadian society suggests that special language classes for older adult immigrants are justified.

It has been established that ability to learn need be no barrier for the older learner. Negative attitudes toward learning, the lack of motivation, and the absence of suitable opportunities to learn are far greater obstacles. Older adults require different kinds of learning experiences from those normally provided for younger adults. The physical environment in which the class is conducted, the content selected, and the instructional processes need to be modified to accommodate the differing physical and emotional needs of older students. Any lowering of performance encountered among older adults is more likely to result from a lack of attention to these factors rather than any basic lack of ability to learn. Among old immigrants, to the normal influence of age must be added the difficulties created by linguistic and cultural barriers.

In view of these factors, it was decided to develop an experimental program to teach English as an additional language for older immigrants who were excluded from existing courses for one reason or another. The Special Programs Division of Vancouver City College agreed to sponsor such an experiment.

CHAPTER II

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

With the official approval and sponsorship received, only six weeks remained before the date set for the start of the program. Sponsorship by the College did not include financial assistance so all of the work involved had to be done through volunteer labour. At the outset it was necessary to make firm plans, prepare publicity to promote the course and arrange the details associated with beginning the course.

PLANNING

The aspects of existing courses which might deter the older student from participating were considered in arriving at the following administrative decisions:

1. The time of meeting was set from 9:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. This would allow time for the adults to return home for lunch as this might be important if the individual were responsible for preparing lunch.
2. The course would meet on two *consecutive* days in order that material taught on the first day would have more immediate reinforcement.
3. The pilot course would run for seven weeks (fourteen sessions) and a further five weeks would be offered at the end of that time if there was a demand. This would make a total of twenty-four sessions which was felt to be an adequate length for a reasonable evaluation to be made.
4. The course would be operated in a community centre rather than a school as this would have the connotation of pleasure and friendliness rather than of institution and authority.

5. Although there was no specific minimum age limit set, it was made clear in the advertising that the course was for the more mature student.
6. The teachers selected were all in the "mature" age group.
7. The content of the course was kept flexible as it was not known in advance what the specific needs of the students would be since many would have lived in Canada for some years and would not need the same orientation to Canadian Society as would a young immigrant.

The Board of Parks and Public Recreation permitted the use of the Kitsilano Community Centre. These premises are available for classes rent free so long as each student pays the local Centre membership fee. This fee varies but is usually $1.00 or $2.00 per year and free for those over sixty-five. The Vancouver City College agreed to pay this membership from the course fees paid by the participants.

Two large rooms were made available at the community centre with a third room in the basement if it was needed. The two rooms were located on the main floor opposite one another. Washrooms were conveniently adjacent and such items as chalkboards, coat-racks, coffee-urn, chairs and tables were also provided. The only major drawback encountered was the lack of cupboard space which meant that supplies and materials had to be carried back and forth each day. This proved to be a considerable chore as equipment included such things as books, refreshments, and instructional devices.

The goals for the course in the order of importance were as follows:

1. To give each participant confidence in his ability to learn and the incentive to continue learning.
2. To help individuals develop social skills so that they could become more involved in the life of the community.
3. To teach the student some English in a situational context that would enable him to perform some action (e.g., go shopping, get on a bus alone) that he had previously been unable or afraid to do due to his inability to communicate.

Although one aim of the project was to teach the adults English, it would be considered successful if the first goal was attained.

Apart from the foregoing goals there were some secondary ones:

1. To show the education authorities concerned that such different and innovative programs were worthy of their support.
2. To create job opportunities for older adult educators.

Promotion

The greatest problem that had to be faced was that of recruiting a sufficient number of adults to form at least one class with the minimum registration required by Vancouver City College. Normally this is fifteen students, although the College had stated that they might make an exception in this instance.

The first step in recruitment was to try to determine the ethnic distribution in Kitsilano. This proved difficult as the latest Canadian Census figures were ten years out of date and the Department of Immigration and Manpower had no figures for specific areas within the city. The Principal of Kitsilano Secondary School agreed to make a spot survey of foreign students in his school which provided a list of sixty-four such students showing a preponderence of Germans (twenty-two) and Greeks (seventeen) with a scattering of Italian, Chinese, Polish, Dutch, Danish, Hungarian and Punjabi.

On receipt of this information, a leaflet was written entitled "Could This Be You?" and addressed to a prospective student. This pointed out the advantages of being able to speak the English language in Vancouver, outlined the particulars of the proposed course, and gave details about it. In the leaflet the word "mature" was used to describe the people for whom the classes were intended. It was realized that this was a North American adjective often employed because the youth cult in this society has denigrated the terms "older" or "aging," replacing them with such euphemisms as "senior citizen." In many cultures, to be old is

considered a positive rather than a negative status symbol, therefore, when having the leaflet translated into different languages, the translators interpreted the word "mature" according to the mores of their society using the equivalent of "older" where it would be a positive word. Some of the translators stated that a literal interpretation of the word "mature" might have deterred some prospective students because it would have had the connotation to them of "wise" or "clever" and made them feel inferior. It was particularly important that the translations were worded in such a way that prospective students were made aware that the classes were specifically for the not-so-young and that there was no prerequisite of previous learning or academic ability.

The leaflet was translated into German, Greek, Italian, Chinese, Punjabi, Spanish, Japanese and Russian. The reason for selecting these particular languages was mainly expediency as it was necessary to get the translations done in a very short time in order to have the leaflets printed and distributed with a minimum of delay. The first four languages were listed in the Kitsilano School survey. Although Punjabi was low on the survey list, it was known that there were a considerable number of East Indians living not too far from the area and immediate translation was available. Spanish was requested by a teacher who taught at a local convent school and had heard about the proposed course. She was working with Spaniards in the area and felt that there might be several interested in taking the course and offered to have the translation done. Japanese and Russian were also suggested by interested people in the community who volunteered to do the translations and distribute the leaflets. It was not possible to obtain translations into Dutch, Danish, Hungarian or Polish in sufficient time for printing and distribution.

A press release was prepared which included a brief description of the course, the philosophy behind it, and details of the location, time and fee. This was not translated into the languages of the ethnic papers to whom it was submitted as they would do this themselves.

The next problem was that of distribution. Many outlets were investigated including churches and ethnic newspapaers which were con-

tacted by using the yellow pages in the telephone directory. Priests and editors were interviewed and in most cases they showed definite enthusiasm for the idea of the proposed course. No-one refused assistance in the distribution of the pamphlets and in many cases names of other useful contacts in the ethnic community were supplied which were added to the distribution list.

In addition to contacting leaders in the ethnic communities, the various local mass media were approached with considerable success. Items appeared in several local newspapers and a news report and an interview were shown on two local television stations.

Local schools, both ethnic and Canadian, agreed to distribute pamphlets to their students and ethnic stores also co-operated. The Kitsilano Information Centre and some of the Neighbourhood Houses agreed to advertise the classes. Some doctors also took the leaflets for distribution to foreign-speaking patients. The local library placed leaflets on their information board, the Immigration Services Committee had the details available in their office, and several ethnic societies and associations undertook to distribute copies. Three foreign radio stations (Italian, Greek and Indian) agreed to read the information in the press release, and the T. E. A. L. teachers in the area were given copies to distribute to students in their classes who might have older relatives or friends who would be interested.

A total of seventy-five outlets were used including twelve churches, nine newspapers, thirty ethnic stores, five schools and twenty miscellaneous places and people. In the comparatively short time available to publicize the course a fairly comprehensive campaign was carried out.

With the promotional campaign completed, all that remained was to await enquiries. These were directed either to the organizer of the course or to the Coordinator of English Language Training Courses at Vancouver City College through two telephone numbers included in the advertising. The Coordinator redirected all enquiries to the course organizer who ultimately received them all.

Response to the Promotion

The initial response was better than anticipated and detailed records were kept of the callers (who were not always the prospective student), the source of their information, the native language of the prospective student, and any other relevant information obtainable over the telephone. When a prospective student called there was sometimes a language difficulty; however, many Europeans have French as an additional language and by using a little French and German it was usually possible to obtain at least a name and address. The translations of the pamphlet were kept by the telephone and often proved useful in communicating with the caller. In most cases, a leaflet in the appropriate language was mailed to those making enquiries.

Thirty-one enquiries were received and of these twenty-six, or 84 per cent, registered in the course. In addition, twenty-one people registered without having made a telephone enquiry beforehand. Two of the forty-seven students withdrew when they were advised that their level of English was too high for the classes and both were directed to the regular Vancouver City College classes. The percentage response from the telephone enquiries actually registering in the course was considerably higher than might have been anticipated.

The five people who enquired but did not register telephoned again to explain why they would not be able to participate and gave the following reasons:

- Husband was sick, she would come later (she did).
- Husband and wife both sick--they would come later (they did not).
- Acquired a day-time job and could not manage the time.
- Had no transportation and could not manage to go on the bus alone.

An analysis of the information outlets revealed that newspaper advertising was the most frequently reported source of information.

Forty-five students mentioned fifty sources from which they learned of the course. Of these fifty outlets, 58 per cent were newspapers, divided between ethnic papers (30 per cent), the one local daily paper (22 per cent) and the small weekly local paper (6 per cent). The remaining 42 per cent learned about the course from a variety of sources including television, churches, T. E. A. L. teachers, friends, stores and foreign language radio programs. It is clear that any future advertising campaign should include the large daily local paper where the advertisement was often seen by an English-speaking friend of the student who passed on the information.

IMPLEMENTATION

The First Day

The morning of the second of March dawned most inauspiciously with a ranging blizzard and over a foot of snow by 5:00 A.M. It seemed certain that nobody would arrive to register, particularly since the traffic was immobilized on many streets with even buses unable to move. The organizer and four volunteers who lived not too far from the community centre managed to reach there by 8:45 A.M. and rather despairingly prepared the room. At 9:00 A.M. one seventy-two year old Yugoslavian arrived on foot and by 10:00 A.M. eight students had arrived of whom four were men and four women. One had come from the North Shore some ten miles distant but there were none from the immediate area in which the centre is located.

The adults were welcomed and volunteers assisted them with registration. Along with the Vancouver City College registration form, the organizer had compiled a form to gather personal information which had been translated into the eight languages. These were most helpful in making the student feel at ease and the information gained was later useful in this study. The impression gained by the participants on the first day was of great importance. For many of them the mere act of presenting themselves at the community centre would involve great courage; therefore, it was imperative to reinforce the motivation which brought them to register and everything possible was done to assure that they would be made to feel welcome and relaxed. The word "welcome" was

translated into eight languages and written out phonetically so that they could be greeted in their native tongue.

Two illustrated English language textbooks[1] were made available so that the registrants might have something interesting to look at while waiting for classes to begin. As the adults completed registration, they were taken into another room and offered refreshments. Name tags were made for each and they were introduced to other students. When the formalities were completed, there was about an hour left so each teacher and volunteer took one or two students and talked with them on an individual basis. Although this was not a structured lesson, two things were achieved: first, it was possible to make some sort of assessment as to an individual's linguistic ability, and second, having decided the approximate level of the student, a start was made to teach some English with the use of visual aids.

Both teachers and volunteers were aware that this first exposure to the class would be important in retaining the interest or even the subsequent attendance and an effort was made to insure that the adult would go home feeling that if he continued to come to the classes he would be *able* to learn. Each teacher and volunteer, therefore, attempted to teach the students a word or pattern unfamiliar to him, but one which he might reasonably be expected to master in the time available.

The elderly Yugoslavian was drilled the first day on "Yes, it is" "No, it isn't". The latter caused him great difficulty, repeatedly coming out as "No, it is is." As he left he turned and said "No, it is is--I say--tomorrow, I know". And "tomorrow" -- he knew, and proudly repeated for all to hear. This was the kind of positive response which the teachers had sought.

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[1] I. A. Richards and Christine Gibson, *English Through Pictures Book I* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1945) and *A First Workbook of English* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1960). These were sold at $1.00 for the pair.

The Second Day

The weather was still bad and not many new registrants were expected. The organizer, one teacher and one volunteer arrived at the centre at 8:30 A.M. It was anticipated that the two classes would be organized and teaching would begin by 9:30 A.M. Before nine o'clock more new students began coming in and by 9:30 A.M. it was all that the two teachers and one volunteer helper could do to handle the interviewing and registration. Had it not been for the blizzard the previous day, registration would have taken place the first day with ten helpers, but as it was there was a great deal of goodwill and friendliness. Students were again given refreshments, and name-tags, and introduced to one another. The name-tags included the native language so that they could identify their compatriots. Those with more English helped those with a little. The final count on the second day was a total of thirty-three participants.

The registrants were divided into two groups and taken into separate rooms where each was given an introductory lesson and told that the next class would be on the following Tuesday. When Vancouver City College was advised of the number of participants registered it agreed to hire an additional teacher which was a definite concession as under existing regulations there should have been forty-five to justify this number of teachers. This resulted in three groups so that one had to meet in the basement room that had been made available if needed.

The First Seven Weeks

During the first seven weeks, seven more students registered making a total of forty. An oral testing procedure based on the expertise of the teachers was used to grade the level of ability in oral English. On this basis the participants were divided into three

groups: two of beginners with twelve in each and one intermediate group with sixteen students. These classes continued for seven weeks and were offered again for a further five weeks at the request of a majority of the participants.

The Second Session

Vancouver City College agreed to offer a second course immediately following the first, to run for five weeks for a fee of $5.00. Of the forty adults registered in the first course, twenty-six registered for the extension. Of the fourteen who did not continue, five were returning to their own countries, three were visiting their own countries for the summer, three were moving out of town, two were ill and had already missed a number of lessons, two had acquired day-time work, and one elderly lady found the three-bus journey too difficult. It seemed that no one who was able to come failed to re-register. In addition five adults joined the new course, making a total of thirty-one for the second session. As before, these were divided into two groups, one beginners with thirteen and one intermediate with eighteen. Two of the newcomers were brought by other students, two were sent by a T. E. A. L. teacher, and one had telephoned for the original course but had been unable to come because of her husband's illness. The total number of individual registrants for the twelve weeks was forty-five consisting of thirty-six women and nine men including four married couples.

ANALYSIS OF REGISTRATIONS

The information collected from the participants at the time of registration provides a description of the population.

Age

Although the promotional material had been carefully worded to set no chronological age limit and yet to suggest that the classes were for older people, many people expressed doubts that any very old

people would be attracted to the course. They felt that older foreigners would have no desire to learn English, being quite content to speak only their own language within their ethnic groups; that the children of the older immigrant were against their parents learning English and would discourage them; or that they would be too old to be able to start learning a language anyway. These statements reflected the widely held misconceptions which might account for the fact that classes of this type had not been tried before. They also pointed up the need for the adult educator to strive continually to abolish these inhibiting illusions regarding the adult learner, and to create a new public image of the older student.

Among the forty-five participants the age range was from thirty years of age to eighty--a span of half a century-- with the average age just over fifty-eight years. Eight were under fifty years of age. Of the thirty-seven over fifty, twenty-seven were between the ages of fifty-four and sixty-four with the remaining ten over sixty-four years of age. The fact that 22 per cent were over sixty-four years of age and in view of the hazardous weather conditions with which they had to contend as well as the distances some travelled, the belief that some older people *are* motivated to learn was confirmed.

Language

Ten languages were represented in the group including German (twenty-two), Chinese (seven), Greek and Hungarian (three each), Yugoslavian and Polish (two each), one each speaking Ukranian, Italian and Spanish, and three representing three Indian dialects--Punjabi, Hindi and Gujerati. Although there were ten different languages represented, nearly half of the adults were German speaking. On the surface, the predominance of Germans might seem to agree with the results of the school survey noted earlier. On further investigation, even the apparent agreement of the German figures was only coincidental as the school survey was representative only of children living in the Kitsilano area, whereas the German students registered in the courses came from all over the city of Vancouver.

Geographical Area

The geographical distribution of the participants was unexpected. The assumption that older people might have been deterred by the difficulties of travelling if there were no courses within easy reach of their homes was not substantiated. This supposition probably stems from contemporary North American standards where a car is judged a necessity for travelling any distance and had discounted the less demanding standards of some of the citizens of other countries. Whatever the reasons, lengthy and sometimes inconvenient travel did not seem to deter those who wanted to come.

The areas from which the students came were widely separated and ranged as far as fifteen miles from the Centre while few were within reasonable walking distance. Many had to travel for periods longer than the length of the two-hour lesson and were involved in as many as three changes of buses. Travelling was made even more difficult by the snow but in spite of these adverse conditions attendance was high.

Length of Residence in Canada

Registration data showed that eight students (18 percent) had been resident in Canada less than a year but five of these were only visiting. The longest period of residence in Canada was sixty-two years by a women who was a Canadian-born Chinese but knew virtually no English.

Most of the participants (33.3 percent) were resident in Canada within the one to five-year range and the average length of residence was eleven years.

An interesting incidental piece of information was that there were no adults listed as resident in Canada in the categories forty-one to sixty years or twenty-six to thirty years. These two categories represent immigration during the years 1911 to 1930 (which included World War I) and 1941 to 1946 (World War II). Although there would

have been no immigrants during the first World War, there were a large number in the 1920's, so the lack of any figure during this period was apparently merely fortuitous.

CHAPTER III

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESSES AND CONTENT

It was necessary to modify some of the instructional procedures used in regular English language training classes where the major goal is that of achieving a practical ability to communicate in English as quickly as possible. In such classes, most of the students are younger and are, therefore, not averse to a certain amount of pressure. The three instructors of this pilot course for older immigrants had no previous experience with older adults but each had preconceived ideas about the expectations of the participants.

INSTRUCTION

The aural-oral method as used in the regular English language training classes was the main basis of instruction with some adherence to the older cognitive code-learning theory. The combination of the two approaches was considered to be more effective for learning both understanding and speaking.[1]

The main approach was the use of a situational context with a wide variety of audio-visual aids. As Hall pointed out, it is not possible to learn in a void uncorrelated to other aspects of culture; it is necessary to know what sort of situations are the ones in which certain phrases are used, and how they show ways of living and thinking.[2]

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[1]John B. Carroll, "The Contribution of Psychological Theory and Educational Research to the Teaching of Foreign Languages," *Trends in Language Teaching*, ed. Albert Valdman (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1966), pp. 93-106.

[2]Robert A. Hall, Jr., *New Ways to Learn a Foreign Language* (New York: Bantam Books Inc., 1966), p. 109.

Fries put it succinctly when he said "linguistic meaning without social-cultural meaning constitutes. . .'mere verbalism.'"[3]

Within this structure basic speech patterns and phrases were taught. In addition, the students were encouraged to socialize more with people who spoke English outside the classroom and outside their own ethnic communities.

Aural-Oral Method

The aural-oral method (also known as the audio-lingual method) stresses a listening-speaking sequence in the learning of a foreign language. Adherents of the method emphasize the physiological and psychological advantages of being trained to listen to sounds before attempting to reproduce them. Training the listening facilities improves the accuracy with which sounds are heard and enables the student to reproduce these with greater ease thus avoiding the frustration which inability to articulate a certain sound produces in the student. Successful achievement in this increases motivation.

Newmark and Diller noted that when students are required to speak without first listening, the likelihood of errors is increased and the consequent apprehension engendered in the student inhibits learning as well as creating a lack of confidence which may be permanent.[4]

Palmer notes that the art of using the spoken every-day form of any given language is one which is possessed by every human being who is not congenitally deaf or dumb and that this does not depend on intelligence, courses of study, deliberate effort, concentration, nor reasoning powers. The actual oral learning of a language has nothing

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[3]Charles C. Fries, 'Meaning and Linguistic Analysis," *Language*, XXX (Jan. Mar. 1954), 57-68, reprinted in *Readings in Applied English Linguistics*, ed. Harold B. Allen (1958), pp. 101-13.

[4]Gerald Newmark and Edward Diller, "Emphasizing the Audio in the Audio-Lingual Approach," *Teaching English as a Second Language*, ed. Harold B. Allen (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1965), p. 353.

whatever to do with reading, writing, alphabets, spelling, literary composition or any of the higher forms of language. Palmer insists that there is a universal spontaneous capacity for using spoken language in the mother tongue without any awareness whatever of the grammar or structure or rules of that language. Palmer compares two ways of learning an additional language; first, in the same way in which we learn our first--by listening and then imitating; second, by what was the more usual method of using the eyes and studying rules, but often lacking opportunity to listen to the language. He concludes that the former method is always more successful and utilizes the same spontaneous capacity used when first learning to speak.[5]

Situational Teaching

The modification of the aural-oral method by the cognitive code-learning theory was achieved by the stress on situational teaching. This provided a safeguard against the possibility of exclusive adherence to the former tending to lessen meaningfulness and understanding. While agreeing that in order to produce specific sounds, it is necessary first to hear them clearly, it is also necessary that the student be able to reproduce the sound and to use it in a situational context.

With this in view, the content was planned to include as many simulated situations as were compatible with good linguistic training. Of course, some basic drilling and repetition outside of any situational context was unavoidable; but review and reinforcement of already drilled patterns could usually be woven into situational lessons.

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[5]Harold E. Palmer, *The Principles of Language-Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 201-5.

Typical of some of the simulated situations used were such activities as going to the post office to obtain and fill in various forms, going shopping in various stores, laying a table, or visiting the doctor. In every case relevant objects such as government forms, store goods or cutlery were used. Each student in turn performed whatever action was necessary while at the same time speaking whatever phrases the teacher was drilling. This type of lesson was enjoyed by the participants and resulted in good retention of the units taught.

Team Teaching System

Although the participants were on different levels in terms of ability to speak English, it was decided not to segregate them into completely separate groups. Instead, a team-teaching approach was adopted which was not normally used in the regular English language training classes at Vancouver City College. Although a teacher was responsible for the main course outline of one of the groups, none taught one class exclusively. The first hour of instruction was spent with one group and in the second hour each teacher spent one half-hour each with the other two classes. Thus, the teachers rotated through the three classes at every two-hour session. This procedure exposed the participants to three diffent voices and personalities and reduced the boredom that might result from the necessary repetition of lessons. It also provided a very natural break in the continuity and obviated the necessity of creating artificial breaks periodically. The teachers worked together closely to insure continuity and reinforcement in the material covered each day.

An illustration of this team approach is as follows: the first teacher covered the formulation of questions with the use of words such as "who," "where," "when." This is a fairly routine lesson with drilling in the use of the word and an explanation of the types of answers suited to each. The second teacher role-plays real life use of the

words such as going shopping. The students act as customers and learn two useful phrases-- "I want a ....." and "How much is it?" Having completed their shopping the teacher than asks such questions as "Who bought a box of matches?" "Where did she buy it?" This gives the learner a feeling of achievement and helps to reinforce the original material learned.

After this exercise, the third teacher brings into the class a picture of a family at play and describes the various situations depicted. The class repeats this as a group and individually. ("The boy is throwing the ball." "The girl is on the swing.") The teacher then asks: "Who is throwing the ball?" "Where is the girl?" to which the learner responds so that the original learning is again reinforced but in a different situation in order to facilitate transfer.

This team approach enables the material to be covered thoroughly during one two-hour session, while avoiding the monotony of constant repetition by one teacher. Although it created more work for the instructors, there was no doubt that this procedure was more effective in this particular situation but it should be noted that it requires a cohesive team with a great deal of cooperation and mutual understanding to create an effective learning situation.

Teaching Aids

The instructional devices used to enhance the learning were many and varied. The sole aid available in the community centre was a chalkboard so that instructors had to provide their own audio-visual aids. Tape recorders were used to provide an opportunity for individuals to hear themselves, which added interest to the lessons. In order to make the learning situation as realistic as possible, instructors brought a great variety of objects such as foods (packaged and natural), clothing, model telephones, pictures, playing cards, cutlery, and government forms with which they demonstrated the use of language in many different ways.

CONTENT

The course content was not outlined in advance because it was not known what the adults would need to learn. Many of them would have been exposed to the English language for some time and might have acquired some understanding or even ability to read but with very little ability to speak. In any case, their needs would not be comparable with those of a recently arrived immigrant.

Lesson Outline

Although not following the Martin book[6] as closely as is usual in the regular classes, most of the lesson material was derived from it. The Richards and Gibson book[7] which the students purchased, also covered much of the same material and sometimes was used in class.

The two beginners' classes started with the basic phrases of introduction (My name is ..... I come from .....) followed by the simple phrases "This is a ....." "That's a ....." and "Is this a .....?" and "Is that a .....?" introducing simple objects. The more sophisticated group did much the same at a faster rate with longer phrases. All the teachers made a practice of writing some simple phrases on the blackboard each morning. These usually included the date and the day and perhaps a remark about the weather, some current event, or a thought for the day. The students looked forward to reading these and were proud when they could. The lesson would start with a brief reference to this, after which each student brought a question to ask of another student, so that each both asked and answered a question. Corrections were made immediately by another student where possible rather than by the instructor. This too was popular with the students. Even the beginners managed with great pride to ask "How are you?" or "What colour is your dress?"

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[6] Carson W. Martin, *An Introduction to Canadian English*, Teachers' Handbook 1 (Ontario: Department of the Provincial Secretary and Citizenship, 1963).

[7] I. A. Richards and Christine Gibson, *English Through Pictures, Book I* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1945).

A sample of a typical day's lesson in both levels of class follows: 'Teacher 1' is used to denote the main teacher who plans the lesson for the class and takes it for the first hour. Teachers 2 and 3 take the class for the two subsequent half-hours.

Beginners' Class

Teacher 1 - Greeting. Repetition of date and phrase on board: "It's a nice sunny day to-day."
- Question and answer roll-call.
- Review of "Yes, it is" and "No, it isn't" taught in previous lesson.
- Conversation: Hallo. How are you getting on?
I'm fine thanks. What are you doing now?
I'm learning English in a class.
That's good--I'm very glad.
This is repeated by the whole class, then by the class divided into two, then by individual pairs. A tape recorder may be used effectively here.
- New lesson on pronunciations of "s" ending--[s], [z] and [iz]. The teacher has a dozen different pairs of fruits and vegetables and three trays labelled with these three sounds. She divides the class into two teams who have to place objects in the correct tray--e.g., bananas in [z] tray, carrots in [s] tray and cabbages in [iz] tray.
- Song--"This land is my land, This land is your land."

Teacher 2 - Colour chart--teaching different colours. Questions--"Is this blue?" "Yes, it is." "Is it green?" "No, it isn't." "Is my dress red?" etc.

Teacher 3 - Laying a table. Brings cutlery, plates, etc. Drills "s" endings by means of phrases such as "Put the forks ([s]) here, the knives ([z]) here and the glasses ([iz]) here."

It can be seen from the foregoing how the main teacher of the beginners' class has planned a hour's lesson which is reinforced in part by both the secondary teachers who, at the same time, also teach something new. It can also be seen that the repetition by three teachers is not obvious to the students, but does give them a good chance to answer questions successfully.

Intermediate Class

Teacher 1 - Greeting and explanation of phrase "liquid sunshine" on board.
- Questions and answer roll-call.
- Review of future tense ("going to" and "will") taught at length in previous lesson.
- Lesson on words associated with clothing (various items on hand). "Putting on," "taking off," "wearing," etc. Demonstrations by teacher and pupils with use of statement and question forms-- "What is she wearing?" "She is wearing ....."
- Conversation: What are you going to wear tonight?
  I think I'll wear my blue dress(suit).
  Will you put on a hat?
  No, I don't think so. Will you?

  This is repeated in the same way as described in the Beginners' class.
- Practice of to-day's clothing lesson with the use of "Old Maid" playing cards which have pairs of pictures of people of certain types (e.g., singer, motorist,

nurse, etc.). Teacher retains one set and gives each student one card of other set; she then holds up one card and asks "Who has the nurse?" When the student has replied, the teacher asks such questions as "What is she wearing?" "What is she doing?" "Is she wearing a blue dress?" This not only ties in with the lesson on clothing, but also reviews other patterns and a previous lesson on colours.

Teacher 2 - Shows a picture of a department store where a woman and her daughter are selecting a skirt. Asks questions to elicit "putting on" and "wearing." Teaches "to try on." Explains about price tags, bringing specimens to hand round. Uses tape measure and explains about Canadian sizing methods.

Teacher 3 - Shows students an airmail letter and teaches conversation: I've had a letter.
Who is it from?
It's from my sister. She sent some photos.
May we see them please?
Conversation is practised in usual manner and then the teacher shows the class coloured photographs of her family and asks the students to describe what they are wearing.

Again it will be noted that, while teaching new items, those taught by the main teacher in the first hour are reinforced.

Course Outline

A general outline of the situations established for the lessons is shown below. These include situations developed by all three teachers which they usually managed to adapt for both levels of class.

Situation	Materials Used
General form filling out	Registration forms for classes
Specific form filling out	Model Post Office wicket and selection of government forms
Telephoning for information (e.g. transportation, library)	Two plastic telephones and telephone directory.
Sending mail	Model Post Office wicket and selection of parcels, letters and stamps
Setting a table	Cutlery, crockery, mats, glasses
Going to the bank	Cheques, deposit slips, bank book
Going to the doctor	List of questions asked by nurse
Going shopping: Drug store) Grocery) Kitchen utensils) Clothing) Bakery) Produce)	Various items for purchase which could be found in the special stores or departments mentioned

It was not always possible to use a situational context, but various visual aids often added to the interest in such cases. These are listed with the main lesson taught, but in each case secondary items of learning were introduced or reinforced during the lesson.

Material	Lesson
Clock	Telling the time
Colour chart	Learning colours
Bottles of liquid	Concept of full, empty, etc.
Playing cards (various)	No specific lesson but often used for drilling patterns
Calendars and date cards	Days, months, years, seasons
Photographs	No specific lesson but useful for emphasizing various learning materials.
Clothing	Used in several lessons-- 'what kind of' 'what made of' 'try on' 'too large' etc.
Newspaper photographs and headlines	Topical discussions--e.g., Royal visit (relationships-- parents, husband, wife, etc.)
Pens, pencils, bags, boxes and miscellaneous items	Comparisons, plurals, sizes, shapes, etc.

The Coffee Break

The mid-morning coffee break took place immediately following the first hour. It constituted an important part of the learning situation, although no formal teaching took place. All three classes came together and proudly practised their new skills with other students from different classes and of different language groups. The teachers mingled with the students and saw them comparing notes, practising questions and answers, and even gathered around a tape-recorder purchased by one rather deaf eighty-year old lady who recorded each lesson to play over at home using an ear-plug. Students contributed twenty-five cents a session towards

the purchase of coffee and often brought home-baked ethnic delicacies to share with those from other countries. This period served as a natural break between the first change of instructors so that there was not an abrupt transition from one to another.

It is of interest to note here that the individual instructors rotated, not the classes. Because the three rooms varied greatly in comfort and location, the teachers decided that the classes would rotate daily so that each class enjoyed the comfort of the lounge with its easy chairs and the discomfort of the small, cramped basement room, in turn. This was explained to the class as a democratic principle and appeared to impress them strongly.

Community Centre Visits

Visits with other groups meeting in the community centre were included as part of the learning experience. The instructors made good use of these visits to reinforce already learned words and phrases and to teach new "doing" and "object" vocabulary. This proved to be a successful part of the program. Participants were taken to watch the arts and crafts classes and were most interested to learn that by virtue of their community centre memberships they were eligible to join such classes themselves. One of the most popular visits was to the nursery school. The old people thoroughly enjoyed seeing the children at work and play and talked a lot about it in class afterward.

There was a senior citizens' group meeting in the centre and one day they were having a pot-luck luncheon half-an-hour after the classes finished. They invited the students to participate and the majority of them, on learning what "pot-luck" meant, accepted the invitation and offered to contribute. On the day of the event the senior citizens' group was overwhelmed by the wealth of tasty foreign dishes which appeared and both the hosts and visitors enjoyed an interesting meal.

Pressey stressed the value of this type of approach when he said that "much more attention should be given than is usual to the 'extra-curricular' in adult education, especially for older people. Even more than with young people, social rather than educational advantages may really be most appealing and indeed most important.[8]

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[8]Sidney L. Pressey, "Major Problems--and *the* Major Problem--Motivation, Learning and Education in the Later Years," *Psychological Aspects of Aging* (Menasha: George Banta Co. Inc., 1956), p. 198.

CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

There are certain problems in attempting to make an objective evaluation of this pilot course. It was not possible to undertake a quantitative analysis of progress due both to the comparatively short time-period covered and to the large number of variables involved. The differences in ethnic background, age, general educational standard, intelligence, native language and knowledge of English of the student population precluded any possibility of conducting viable tests of any sort for the purpose of judging, for example, improvement in speaking or understanding English.

Notwithstanding this difficulty, there were several ways in which an evaluation was made. Attendance figures were significant particularly in view of the inclement weather conditions coupled with the age of the participants and the distances travelled. A short questionnaire was administered at the end of the first session with some very positive responses received. An evaluation made by a T.E.A.L.-trained third-year education student at the University of British Columbia who acted as a volunteer teachers' aide during the first session, provided some valuable insights into the overall picture of the project. Finally, and perhaps in some ways most significantly, an anecdotal record based on subjective observations of the instructors, volunteer and others, revealed information which was considered to be of prime importance in the evaluation of the course and in the recommendations for the future.

ATTENDANCE

In order to analyze attendance data, the number of absences was estimated by subtracting the number of actual attendances from the number of possible attendances. This was necessary because merely to

take the total number of registrants multiplied by the total number of sessions would have given an unrealistic figure since some participants registered after several classes had already taken place, some had to terminate before the end of the sessions (because they left Vancouver) and some, due to work shifts, were only able to attend on alternate days. In all such cases they were therefore counted as "possible attendances" on the days they were actually able to attend, and not included as absences on the other days.

The fact that there were students only *able* to attend a limited number of the classes was regarded as a positive factor in evaluating the program. Such participants realized that they would not receive the total number of lessons covered by the fee but they were still willing to pay the total fee for the reduced number of lessons they were able to attend. Three of the participants were only visiting Canada on vacation and had to leave before the end of the course, but still felt that their attendance was worthwhile.

The majority of absences were caused by sickness due to a severe influenza epidemic in March and April. A lesser number were because of shift-changes at work or unavoidable family matters such as a sick child. Attendance in the first seven week session was as follows:

Total number of students registered		40
Possible attendance	544	
Actual attendance	449	
Absences	95	
Percentage attendance		82.5%

During the first five weeks (ten lessons) in March, a total of twenty participants, or 50 per cent of the registrants maintained 100 per cent attendance. For the entire seven-week period eleven people had perfect attendance. The increase in absences coincided with the peak of the influenza epidemic. In addition to the eleven with perfect attendance, eight missed only one lesson and five missed only two.

In the second session of five weeks the attendance was as follows:

Total number of students registered			31
Possible attendance	284		
Actual attendance	274		
Absences	10		
Percentage attendance			97.8%

During this period twenty-seven registrants maintained 100 per cent attendance with the absences of the other four being due to sickness and family matters. The abatement of the influenza epidemic was clearly reflected in the attendance figures during the second session.

The second session was not advertised extensively since it was run primarily at the request of the original participants and was not considered to be a long enough period to make it desirable to attract new students. The thirty-one registrants in this session included twenty-six from the previous session plus five new participants who were brought by former students.

The foregoing figures give a positive indication of the need for the course and the satisfaction of the participants with it, for the following reasons:

1. The fact that so many people registered in spite of the extreme weather conditions and the difficulty in travelling to the centre.
2. The fact that attendance percentages were so high under the above conditions. Even averaging the two sessions and thus including the influenza epidemic, the percentage of attendance was 90 per cent.

3. The fact that the absences were always for unavoidable reasons, the students usually being troubled when having to stay away.

OPINIONS OF PARTICIPANTS

Prior to the end of the first session the organizer sought more definite evidence of student opinion about the course than that deduced from subjective observation. A short questionnaire was distributed to twenty-four individuals who were present and they were encouraged to take the forms home in order that they might get help in understanding and answering them. This would also give them time to consider their replies and not be influenced by instructors or fellow-participants as might occur had the forms been completed in the centre.

The questionnaire contained simple questions requiring mostly yes or no answers while at the same time obtaining the maximum amount of information and keeping the questions as unbiased as possible.

The seven questions with the totals of replies made were as follows:

1. Do you think these classes should be continued? YES-24 NO-0
2. Did you feel you learned something in the first seven weeks? YES-24 NO-0
3. Do you think the time of the day is good? YES-24 NO-0
4. If "No" to No. 3, what time would be better for you. _____ a.m. _____ p.m.
5. Do you feel it is worthwhile travelling a long way to come to class? YES-21 NO-3
6. Do you prefer older teachers like those you had? YES-17 NO-0 DON'T MIND-7
7. Please write in your own words any suggestions or comments you would like to make:

The majority of people did not fill out this question, but those that did covered the following points:

- three people felt the course was excellent just the way it was.
- two people made positive comments about the question and answer period at the beginning of each lesson.
- two people wanted more written on the blackboard.
- two people urged that the courses be continued.
- one person liked having mimeographed examples of lessons given out.
- one person wanted more "demonstration" lessons.
- one person requested that the same teachers remain.

It was evident from this limited questionnaire that there was a positive reaction to the course as a whole from the majority of participants and that the general format was acceptable.

EVALUATION BY TEACHERS' AIDE

During the first session the teachers had the services of a young volunteer. Apart from the practical help given by this young woman, her reasons for offering her time were specific and fortuitously provided the organizer with a further source of evaluation. She was a third-year education student at the University of British Columbia taking the T.E.A.L. course and her observation of and subsequent term paper on this pilot project for teaching English to older immigrants constituted her project for that course. The Adult Education Department of the Vancouver School Board subsequently printed the paper for distribution to interested persons.[1]

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[1]Donna van Norman, *Teaching English to Older People* (Vancouver: Vancouver School Board, April 9, 1971).

This student was able to visit all three classes thereby gaining an overall view of the program denied to the teachers themselves. She mixed freely with the participants during the coffee-break and was able to engage them in unstructured conversation. It was felt, therefore, that her personal evaluation of the project was valuable and some of her comments on various aspects of the course are indicated below.

She noted that "The rotating of teachers, while . . . difficult (for) the teachers, is extremely beneficial to the student," because it made the concentration period for the students shorter and created a natural relaxing break at change-over time; it also exposed the participant to more varieties of speech. (Another unexpected effect, noted by the organizer, was the fact that a student felt free to move "down" to the "lower" class without losing face, knowing that she would face only a change of pace, not of teachers).

The volunteer had expected that the older people might show great lack of confidence, however, she found that after initial hesitancy most of them were able to relax within a very short period of time and suggested that this might be due to lack of competition from younger students.

She had anticipated that the participants might show a lack of perseverance, but noted that "this did not appear to be the case at all, as the students are very determined to correct mistakes and attend regularly." This suggested high motivation and she thought the reasons for this were a combination of "their own inner needs . . . and outer stimulation such as the encouragement given by their teachers."

The value of the social experience gained by the participants particularly impressed this observer who remarked on the enthusiasm engendered by the visits to other programs in the community centre and on the socializing at the coffee break. She felt that one of the very important results of the program was that "none of the students are quite as lonely as they may have been before the program." The opportunities they were given to meet new friends and the knowledge "that

somebody cares about them" were both cited as positive factors from the point of view of the participants. The writer ended her report with the words: "Perhaps most important, for Canadians as a whole, there is the enrichment that comes when people from other countries gain the means . . .of contributing to our culture."

ANECDOTAL EVALUATION

Although a quantitative analysis of the progress of the participants was not possible, observation revealed an improvement illustrated by the anecdotal record which the instructors were careful to keep without the participants being aware that this was being done. A representative selection of these anecdotes has been made.

Increased Confidence

There was no doubt in the minds of the instructors that many of the participants initially approached the class in fear and trepidation so that often it had taken a lot of courage to make the first step. The many expressions of increasing confidence made throughout the course were typified by the following:

- "Coming to these classes, and find we could still learn, and know what you done (this to the organizer who became a student again at age fifty), give us courage to go back to university." (Two well-educated Chinese ladies, aged fifty and fifty-one. These ladies subsequently brought several new students to following sessions.)
- "I tried evening class--went too fast-I could not questions ask. Now here I learn better." (German lady aged sixty.)
- "Before I no speak people--now I speak--very happy." (Greek lady aged sixty-one.)

Social Participation

It was evident to the instructors that one of the most positive outcomes of the course for the registrants was the increased social competence acquired. The following anecdotes are among the many which illustrated this:

- A group of students, after a few lessons, arranged to meet *every* week-day night in one another's homes to practise conversing in English. They included one fifty-eight-year-old recently widowed German lady whose husband had died just three months after they arrived in Canada, and who had been completely without friends. (She has continued to attend both these *and* evening classes since the pilot course started.)
- A fifty-five-year-old Chinese lady who heard that a sixty-year-old Hungarian lady was unable to attend class because of inability to pay, offered to pay her fee anonymously and this was arranged.
- An eighty-year-old near-sighted German lady purchased a tape recorder and taped lessons which she took home to learn from and shared with her classmates during coffee breaks and after class.
- A sixty-year-old German man who had been in Canada less than two years had already returned to Germany twice because he was unhappy here and did not make friends. His daughter and wife persuaded him against his will to join the class. He and his wife were the only two students with perfect attendance from the first day and he became quite sociable. (Both are still attending classes a year later.)
- A forty-eight-year-old Indian lady told the teachers that she had come to class to help get over her grief at the death of her daughter four years previously. She wanted them to know how much she had been helped by meeting other students of different nationalities.
- A sixty-nine-year-old Chinese lady and a sixty-four-year-old Spanish lady, both of whom scarcely spoke English, took great

delight in greeting each other every day with the recently learned "How are you?"--"I'm fine, thank you." accompanied by much bowing and handshaking.

Comments of Relatives and Others

It was not uncommon for relatives to speak with the instructors after class, or even take the trouble to telephone them specially to report on the student's progress. Participants themselves would also relay remarks made to them by their relatives. A sample of such comments is given below:

- 'My grandchildren say I much better speak now." (Sixty-three-year-old German lady.)
- "Thank you so much for your lessons. My mothers loves them--I think it is wonderful." (Son, member of U. B. C. Faculty, of sixty-four-year-old Spanish lady with very little English, who subsequently got herself accepted by the five-month Manpower daily program!)
- "I can tell that the teachers teach from the heart. My mother is so happy--it is the first time she has made friends since she came here over two years ago." (Daughter of fifty-eight-year-old German lady.)
- 'My brother say he glad I come--I learn good." (Sixty-one-year-old Greek lady with little English--one who had obviously been living in a 'language ghetto' since coming to Canada two years previously.)
- "I can hardly believe she is the same woman I knew in India. She was so shy and submissive and almost colourless and now she radiates confidence and character." (Remark made by a visiting Professor of Education who recognized a forty-seven-year-old Indian lady she had met during an educational tour.)

Evidence of Learned English

It was not anticipated that great progress in learning English would be made in twelve weeks, but the following anecdotes show that the learners had acquired some English especially in the situational lessons:

- A sixty-four-year-old Spanish lady with very little previous ability in English, who had been in Canada for a year, got on a bus and went home by herself after the first lesson. This was the first time she had ever done this and she refused the offer of a ride home to do so. Her son reported that she was so excited and full of confidence after the lesson that she wanted to undertake this new venture.
- A sixty-three-year-old German lady at the pot-luck luncheon noticed that the crockery was of assorted colours. She had just had a lesson on "the same as" and "different from" and proudly demonstrated her newly acquired phrases by stating, "This cup is different colour from saucer--same colour as plate."
- A fifty-year-old Polish lady informed her daugher-in-law that the classes were very "democratic" because they "took turns" to use the best classroom. Both these concepts had been taught in her class.
- A sixty-seven-year-old German man had joined the class only to accompany his new and much younger wife who spoke very little English. He himself spoke seven languages including English. After a few lessons he admitted to the instructor that "I thought I knew it all, but I am learning much and know now I have much to improve myself too."

- After a lesson shopping, which included how to return an article for refund or exchange (not a practice in most other countries), a thirty-five-year-old Chinese lady reported that she had taken back an unsatisfactory item of clothing and received her money back.

Other Anecdotes

The foregoing anecdotes were roughly classifiable under the four categories given. There are some, though, which defy specific categorization but are positive indications of the value of the course. These are included in the following miscellany:

- A forty-eight-year-old Italian lady told the instructors, "You good teachers--you put it in my head good."
- A fifty-one- year-old Chinese lady who had been a missionary for many years took the organizer's hands in hers and said, "The Lord gave me special opportunity when He guided me to you--He will bless wonderful work."
- Some students came as much as an hour early to be able to come at all, as rides with working relatives were available. They spent the time studying and putting out chairs, tables and chalkboards and generally being helpful.
- A German couple came in for just one hour when they had a mid-morning appointment, rather than miss the class altogether.
- A sixty-four-year-old Spanish woman who had to miss a class to help with a friend's emergency, sent a note apologizing and asking the teachers to let her have a resumé of what she had missed.
- A sixty-year-old Austrian lady who had to leave before term-end to return to Austria, wrote, "I thank you for all the English lessons. . . .I am sorry that I can't continue. . . . When I am coming back from Austria I see you again."

- A fifty-year-old Chinese woman begged the organizer to run classes every day "so we learn more."
- A speech made by the multi-lingual German man on behalf of the class at the term-end party, when presenting a beautiful candle to the organizer, included the words: "We give you this candle as a symbol of the light you have brought into our lives."
- One of the instructors, a retired university professor, stated that in all his thirty years of teaching he had never had more responsive pupils nor gained such satisfaction from teaching.

ATTAINMENT OF GOALS

Despite the obvious difficulties of evaluating the course, the organizer, instructors and Vancouver City College officials all felt satisfied that the goals were achieved and that the course was successful:

1. The success of the goal of giving participants confidence in their ability to learn and the incentive to continue learning was amply illustrated by the re-registration figures.
2. Though perhaps more difficult to corroborate, the attainment of the goal of bringing about a social change in the life of the adult so that he would become more involved in the life of the community was supported by the anecdotal record.
3. The goal of teaching the learners some English which they could use in a situational context was achieved to the satisfaction of the instructors both in class-room performance and by out-side actions as reported in the anecdotal record.

The success in achieving the two secondary goals was also ratified:

1. The Vancouver City College was sufficiently impressed by the pilot project to agree to the request for an extension of the course and to plan for expansion of the course as a part of the regular adult education program in the coming winter semester.

2. The proposed expansion will create new part-time job opportunities for older adult educators.

To sum up, there appeared to have been little doubt as to the correctness of the assumption of the need for such courses. It would also be reasonable to state that the outcomes in some ways exceeded expectations.

Perhaps the only unanswered question was that voiced by many of the participants, especially those with many years residence in Canada --"Why not before?"

CHAPTER V

SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS

Having evaluated the course and obtained permission from the authorities to expand it, plans for future courses were developed and implemented.

SEMINAR FOR FUTURE TEACHERS

Because of the success of this course, it was decided to create a pool of older teachers with some orientation to the different approaches and techniques found effective during the pilot course. Those selected were trained teachers, but they were chosen for special qualities which were required by these special classes. The main points stressed were those which were in some cases peculiar to special classes for older adults rather than to regular English language training classes. The points covered included:

1. The need for a friendly relaxed atmosphere as typified by the community centre location in preference to a school. It was pointed out that this did not mean that the teachers themselves could relax as a great deal of individual attention must be given before older adults feel at ease in the learning situation.
2. As many students would have made a great effort to come the first time they would probably be fearful at first; therefore, it was necessary to extend a warm and friendly welcome to a new student on this first day. Registration for regular classes is more routine and younger students do not often need as much added encouragement and attention as do older students.

3. The team teaching concept was described on the basis of the experience in the pilot program. It was stressed that this required more preparation and a close working relationship among members of the team.
4. The need for situational teaching of a type useful to the students was stressed; consequently, teachers should make themselves acquainted with facilities and services in the community which might be useful to their students.
5. The use of many and varied visual aids to complement the situational teaching was advocated.
6. Reinforcement by achievement is an important facet with older students who are somewhat fearful of what was for most of them a new venture. Teachers were urged to keep in mind the potential level of achievement of each student and to elicit replies only when confident of the student's ability to be successful with a minimum of help.

PLAN FOR FUTURE COURSES

The pilot project has emphasized certain factors that should be taken into account in planning future programs for older adult immigrants.

1. The morning time was overwhelmingly preferred by the older student.
2. The informality of the community centre setting was enjoyed by the participants, some of whom indicated that they had been intimidated when attempting to register in night school programs.
3. Many of the students voiced their appreciation of the fact that they were not in competition with younger students.

4. The majority of the participants preferred having older instructors and several indicated that they felt that younger teachers were less patient and did not understand them as well. While this may not always be true, the fact that it *appears* so to the learner must be considered.
5. Although courses closer to home would obviously have been easier for the participants, distance proved to be no deterrent to the majority.
6. Those who had attempted the regular courses of the Vancouver City College were unanimous in agreeing that the content was not geared to their needs.

Based on these findings, a plan for future courses was formulated. Although this plan was specifically for use by the Vancouver City College, it may be useful for other areas wishing to initiate this type of program.

1. First determine the existing programs in the area and plan to fill the gap in these.
2. Ascertain the geographical location of the population for whom the course is being planned and choose a centre as close as possible to the intended participants.
3. Allow several months before the planned opening date in which to produce and disseminate promotional material. Large time allowances must be made for delays resulting from the absence of key people, waiting periods for time slots on TV and radio programs, and similar setbacks.
4. Visit the centres selected for location of the classes and make sure that all amenities are available and suitable for older people. Minimum requirements include nearby toilet facilities, good lighting, adequate comfortable seating, and chalkboards.

5. Carefully plan the course content and instructional processes to meet the needs of the anticipated participants.
6. Carefully select a nucleus of teachers and arrange an orientation seminar for them well in advance of the opening date to give them time to produce the appropriate instructional devices. Points to consider in the selection of teachers are:
   a. Training and competence in teaching English as an additional language to adults.
   b. A warm, outgoing and patient-with-people personality.
   c. An innovative teacher, not hide-bound by conventional approaches or methods.
   d. An interest in working with older adults in a learning situation.

SUBSEQUENT COURSES

After the success of the pilot course, which ended in May, 1971, it was agreed to expand the course into other areas of Vancouver in the following September. Classes were offered in six community centres, including the original one, in an effort to make them available throughout the City of Vancouver. Two teachers were placed in each centre in order to be able to separate the absolute beginners from those with some knowledge of English, and to continue the team-teaching method. Extensive advertising was done including a much wider range of ethnic papers, a number of appearances on TV and radio stations, and a greater dissemination of leaflets by the twelve instructors in the areas surrounding their community centres. The response was excellent with a total of 124 registrants. Nineteen of these had participated in the pilot course.

The overall attendance figures for these six centres for the first seven-week course showed an average of 89 per cent. A second seven-week course was offered immediately following the first. Although a large number of participants expressed a desire for this continuance, a good many of the housewives felt that they would be unable to attend because of the approaching Christmas season when they would be involved in household duties. The final registration figure was 102 including sixty-eight previous participants and thirty-four new ones.

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